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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

AUG. AND SEPT.,* 1855.

DEMORALIZATION INSEPARABLE FROM WAR.

During one of the warm debates in the British Parliament on the abolition of the Slave Trade, some of its apologists, unable to deny its evils, proposed to retain the trade with regulations that would in future prevent all such evils, under the idea of their being only abuses, when Burke indignantly exclaimed, 'Regulate robbery and murder by law!' Not a few seem to have the same idea of war, and talk very much as if its evils spring from its abuse, and would be gradually removed by the work of Christian civilization correcting its mistakes, refining its barbarities, and thus making the custom at length entirely consistent with the gospel.

There never was a more preposterous idea than that of supposing it possible to have war without its vices, crimes and woes. These enter into its very elements; and no degree of civilization, or form of Christianity that tolerates the custom, can alter its essential character, or materially diminish its atrocities and horrors. Its very essence lies in retaliation and vengeance; it rests on the principle of returning evil for evil; and hence its grand aim and effort must always be to inflict the greatest possible amount of mischief and misery. You can no more change the nature of war by any conceivable meliorations, than you can refine theft into honesty, adultery into chastity, or idolatry into the worship of the true God. War *must* be a tissue of crimes; the commission by wholesale, of such deeds as cover individuals with infamy, and send them for condign punishment to the prison and the gallows. We must either abolish the custom entirely, or retain it with essentially the same abominations and woes that have always characterized it.

We are glad to find so many conductors of the secular as well as religious press, opening their eyes to this great fact, so obvious from the progress of the present war.

"Before the Eastern war was entered upon, it was customary to speak of the greater humanity which would characterize the scene of bloodshed in future conflicts. The scenes in the Crimea have negatived that prophecy quite effec-

* The June No. was a double one, and the next No. *should* have been for August instead of July. Hence the date of this No. to correct the mistake.

tually ; and late accounts speak of intentions to poison the defenders of Sebastopol by the use of deadly gases, and also of plans for destroying the garrison by starvation. As taking the place becomes more and more difficult, the disposition to resort to brutal weapons and schemes increases. In a desperate condition the allies must resort to desperate measures, as is always the case in war."—*Chr. Register, (Boston.)*

"It is not the bloody battle—not the cool and deadly aim at the life of his fellow, taken by the rifleman—not the shot and shell hurled recklessly to produce indiscriminate destruction, which shows fully the horrors of war ; but it is the demoralizing tone in which a whole nation is brought to exult in the disasters and miseries of others, even those not caused by their valor directly, if at all.

We had been taught to believe that Christianity, if it had not put an end to war, had rendered it much more humane ; and instances were held up, after naval engagements, of the whole force of the conqueror being turned to rescue the drowning enemy, and bind up their wounds. But now that the light of the press is let in upon the details of its scenes, the gilding of these glowing and generous pictures is sadly rubbed off by the touches of truth.

We are all rejoicing at this moment because of a plentiful harvest, and the increasing demands for our ships. But what was recently the joy and glory of England ? In what was the whole nation exulting as one of the most effective exploits of the war ? In the destruction of 241 ships, four steamers, and immense stores of the finest wheat, six millions of rations ! That which gives happiness and life to every man, woman and child, not even carried away, but coolly *burnt*, without even the excitement of a man killed in its defence, or of a blow struck on either side, beyond "shelling the towns at long range." And a whole nation is crammed for a fortnight with the details of this, as a most glorious achievement and source of joy ! If it were a stern necessity of war, it might have been silently done in anger or in sorrow ; but why with gloating exultation ? Because such is the nature of war. England and France are not worse in this than we should be.

Three *grave-fields*, (for the term *grave-yards* is hardly appropriate) with seven cart loads of dead at one time, and the whole process of sepulture may be observed with a good glass ; and these are not soldiers who have fallen in battle. It is noticed with satisfaction that they are the victims of disease, or perhaps of famine. These things are not only watched eagerly by the besiegers, but carefully and exultingly recorded in the *Times*, and spread all over England as the hope and the joy of this glorious thing the Allies call their war.

The Emperor of Russia takes cold and dies. It is telegraphed to London in four hours. Stage managers come before the curtain, and announce it to the audience in all the theatres, as if it were a second battle of Waterloo won. And yet, he is not slain in war, he bears no wound, but the hand of God in death is upon him in his own bed, as it must be soon in turn on each one of those to whom all this is announced ; and, without a thought, the heart leaps to the mouth, and the multitudes clap their hands, and shout, and hurrah. Even the papers and the reviews revile the dead lion, and actually exult. A more brutal or humiliating thing has seldom been witnessed. It is all the effect of war.

Let us not deceive ourselves. These men who thus exult in misery are decorous men, educated and refined, many of them ; but they are under the spell of the God of War. The newspaper press lays it all bare, and we can see the system as it is, and all its tendencies ; see its great heart throb and beat through skeleton ribs. Thus far its savage feelings are not half aroused in England ; its exasperations have not begun to be awakened. What are the full horrors which it can produce, God only knows. But this is clear, that all which gives joy and gladness to the heart in peace, awakens antipathy and hatred in war ;

while all that produces commiseration, such as destruction of food, pestilence, famine, death, in all their most horrid forms, these are the sources of its exultation and glory.

A great war always must tend to brutalize the spirit of a people immeasurably, inconceivably. Both Napoleon and Wellington left the most explicit testimony on this subject. It may be necessary and justifiable in self-defence (?) But may a kind Providence long avert from us the stern necessities and lessons of this great scourge. It is not that we need fear the final results as to an honorable peace (?) The cost of treasure, though immense, would be nothing to us; the blood, though more dear, would be cheerfully spilled in defence of our country, and the green grass would cover the field of battle. But the demoralization of the survivors, the effect on the moral character of all, on the civilization of all, both friends and foes, the loss of industrious habits among the masses, and of social, generous, Christian virtues among the whole people,—these, despite all Alison may say to the contrary, are more and worse than all; these are the great horrors and curses of war.”—*Ledger, (Phil'a.) July 9, '55.*

“War can be traced back as far as human history; and its old cruelties are ascribed to a barbarous age, or to a heathen religion. Heralds were wont to doom an enemy to entire destruction, his fields, his barns, his houses; and men, women and children were adjudged to slavery or death by the conqueror. And in carrying on this work of hell, no enormity was thought to be too great, no cruelty too severe.

For thirty (39) years past the great European powers have kept the peace of the world. So much has been attempted, and even described as having been accomplished, in the way of diffusion of intelligence, refinement, morality, religion and good will among men, that publicists, and even military men, have written that war would be a different thing to-day from what it was in old and barbarous times. The law of nations, it is alleged, is better understood; war's rough visage has been smoothed; its atrocity has been mitigated; it no longer would invade private property, or kill for the sake of massacre. It has been claimed that the professed soldier is no longer the savage gloater over human gore he was in other, in heathen days. ‘The modern soldier,’ Napier, the greatest warrior of the day, remarks, “is not necessarily the stern, bloody-handed man the ancient soldier was; there is as much difference between them as between the sportsman and the butcher; the ancient warrior, fighting with the sword, and reaping his harvest of death when his enemy was in flight, became habituated to the use of slaying. The modern soldier seldom uses his bayonet, sees not his peculiar victim fall, and exults not over mangled limbs as proofs of personal prowess.’

The daily revelations of the Crimea disprove these remarks, and go far to establish the position, that war is still the same ferocious, horrid, tiger-like, fiendish work; war as practised by the semi-barbaric Russ, and the civilized and *Christian* French and English. What, for instance, in sheer bloody-handedness, could exceed that awful mow of a whole Russian battalion, on their retreat in the valley below Inkermann, by the French troops? What can be more sickening to read than the letters spread before the British public in which are the details of personal prowess in mangling limbs, and quenching that precious life which the Creator alone should take away? Where in the annals of all war is there such a tale of human suffering unfolded as that of last winter's work in the lines before Sebastopol, and in the hospitals at Scutari? The very last details of the capture of Kertch are full of all the evils of war, public and private.

Frightful as it is to read the accounts of the carnage on the battle-field, it is sadder to see the evidences of the state of British public opinion. This is lashed up to a perfect war fury; and the worst effect of such occurrences as the massacre at Hango is, that it is seized on to stimulate this feeling. Never

did we read a more savage debate than that in the House of Lords of June 21, occasioned by this sad affair. The earl of Malmesbury characterized it as the most atrocious act, and after ransacking English history, he could find no parallel to it. The earl of Clarendon, for the ministry, pronounced it 'an outrage so horrible and unparalleled, and so much at variance with the usages and customs of civilized nations, that one is compelled to believe the perpetrators of it cannot have acted on instructions, and have met with the approval of their superiors.' Here was some show of sense; but what must be thought of the words of such a character as Lord Brougham? He said, amidst cheers, 'the Russian government must be called on not only to disclaim and disown, but to punish the perpetrators of a deed so extraordinary and so cruel. *If ever the land cried for blood, it is now.*' It is but just to state that such a savage cry for vengeance met with a proper rebuke. The indignation and the feeling exhibited at the alleged violation of a flag of truce, are natural and commendable; but retaliation would only give to the war additional ferocity.

Another evidence is the tone of the British press towards Russia and the Russians. Thus the authorities and people of Hango are spoken of 'as a *pack of savages as ignorant of the inspirations of humanity as of the usages of war among civilized nations.*' Let us reflect a little. The Russians have exhibited not a few traits of humanity. British prisoners who have been taken to the various Russian stations—even to St. Petersburg—have been treated with marked kindness; every attention has been paid to them; and in some instances they have published grateful tributes of acknowledgement. And on various occasions, in interviews before Sebastopol, Russian officers have been spoken of as evincing the courtesy and the refinements of gentlemen. But war is doing its legitimate work of poisoning the public mind. It was so in the past. For years prior to 1815 the same British press was in the habit of thus characterizing the French. Napier, in 1814, says, 'No English writer, orator or politician had for many years used milder terms than robbers, murderers, atheists and tyrants, when speaking of Frenchmen and their sovereign.' The French were about the same sort of people in 1814 they are now; and such language would now be regarded as decidedly libellous. The atrocities committed at Kertch and other places on the Sea of Azoff, have been brought to the notice of the British government. No doubt every attempt will be made to restrain villains from the commission of their villainy. But this will be in vain. War is let loose on the world; war in its most rugged aspect; war verily and literally to the knife, and the knife to the hilt; war in an arena more bloody than the world ever before saw. It will grow naturally by what feeds it—human gore; and the last London Times admits that it '*must continually become more relentless, and more incapable of compromise, or even of humanity.*'"
—*Boston Post.*

RECENT ITEMS FROM THE WAR.

UNSUCCESSFUL ASSAULT BY THE ALLIES.—I can give you few particulars of the attack on the Malakoff; but the plan of assault appears to have consisted in assaulting the work on both flanks and the front simultaneously, and with overwhelming numbers; twenty-five thousand are said to have been engaged.

They found the redoubts swarming with defenders, and guns bristling from every embrasure. On them, as on our own men, *showers of grape and cannister were thrown out, literally mowing down whole battalions at a time*; whilst from along the whole semi-circular line of parapet, the crowd of riflemen sent volley after volley into their disordered ranks, that passed through them like a sheet of molten lead. Three times they gave way, and as often rallied; but